

## Purple Loosestrife *Lythrum salicaria* L.

### Identification:

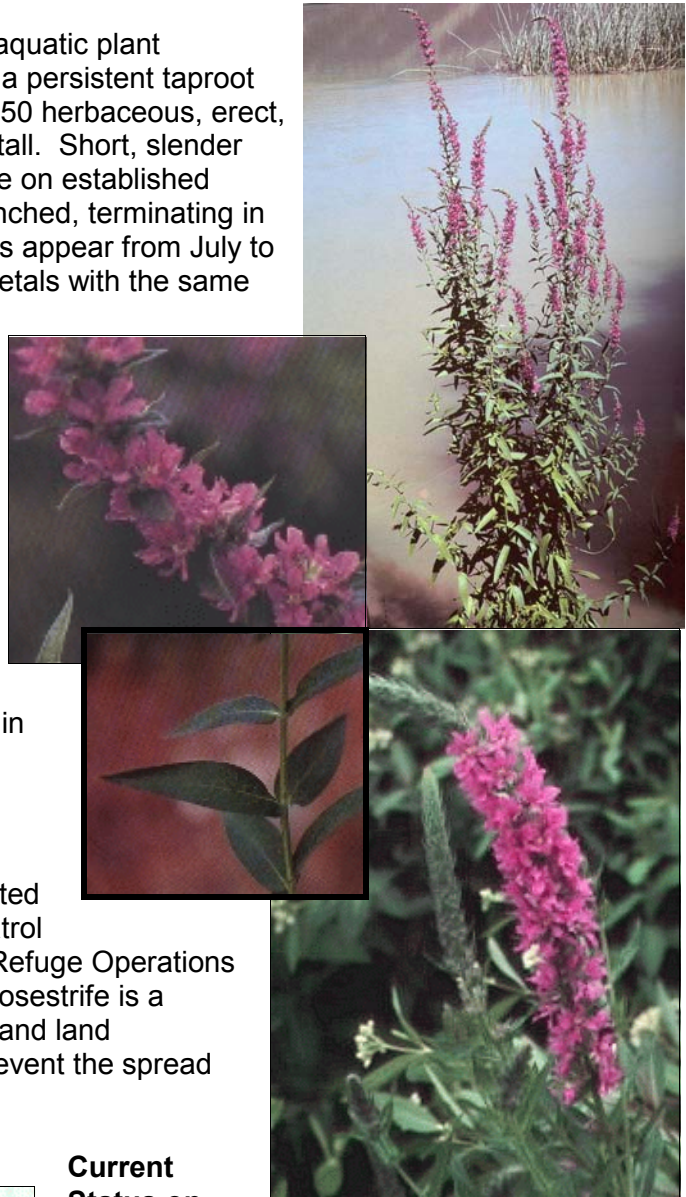
Purple loosestrife is a perennial, emergent aquatic plant associated with moist or marshy areas with a persistent taproot and spreading rootstock. As many as 30 – 50 herbaceous, erect, annual stems per plant can rise to about 9' tall. Short, slender branches spread out to form a crown 5' wide on established plants. Stems are somewhat squarish, branched, terminating in flowering stalks. Showy, rose-purple flowers appear from July to early October. Each flower contains 5 - 7 petals with the same number of sepals. Spreads by producing millions of tiny seeds which are borne on wind or water, and by rhizomatous roots or root fragmentation.

### Potential Damage:

The negative impact from purple loosestrife in wetland habitat far outweighs any economic gain from horticultural or medical uses. Disruption of wetland ecosystems by displacement of native plants, loss of ground cover, nesting materials, and food sources results in loss of waterfowl and other birds, as well as fur-bearing animals.

### Control and Prevention:

Take care not to drive or walk through infested areas. Stop and inspect vehicle between patrol units. MARK SITE on map and provide to Refuge Operations Specialist upon return from field. Purple Loosestrife is a Class B noxious weed in Washington state and land owners/managers are legally required to prevent the spread of this plant.



### Current Status on the Hanford

**Reach National Monument:** Biological controls (*Galerucella* sp. beetles) have been released on the population of purple loosestrife at the White Bluffs boat landing, on the islands in the Hanford Reach, and at the WB-10 wasteway ponds. Future releases will continue to augment these populations. Mechanical treatments, such as mowing, can be used to limit seed production of mature plants, and to prevent spread.